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STAT

U.S. SET TO TRAIN 'SPACE WARRIORS'

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THE U.S. is set to train "space warriors" to protect the heavens in the next 25 years, says the new Jane's Spaceflight Directory.

The authoritative directory further claims that the Soviet Union is winning a race to build a manned station above the earth and now devotes more than 70 percent of its rocket launches to military purposes.

"The battle for space-based laser weapons is settling down to be grimmer and much more expensive than the race to the moon 20 years ago," says editor Reginald Turnill in an introduction to the 311-page survey.

Turnill says that al-

though the U.S. is ahead in space technology, "the Russians have been far more energetic and successful in applying the technology that they possess."

He cites intelligence data which indicates the Soviets may be able to send high-energy laser weapons into orbit by 1986, three years ahead of the U.S.

Turnill says the formation of space commands by the U.S. Air Force and Navy reflect growing concern about increased military activity in space.

"The belief among U.S. defense chiefs that in the next 25 years contests in space are not only possible but almost inevitable, have led to the setting up of the new USAF Space

Command," he says.

The long-term aim is to form the "new breed of military astronauts" among NASA's 77 space travelers into "a separate team who will nurse their secrets," flying shuttle craft "to and from the inevitable manned military reconnaissance platforms," Turnill says.

He predicts fierce technological skirmishing, rather than outright space battles, as the U.S. and the Soviet Union jockey for the "high ground" above earth.

"There's some indication that possibly the Russians have interfered with one or two U.S. satellites used for reconnaissance or spying purposes," Turnill says.

The Soviets spend an

estimated \$18 billion a year on their space program, Turnill says, about \$3 billion more than the Americans.

The directory was published yesterday, the day after President Reagan said he would consider restraining his plans to establish a space-based strategic defense as part of a new effort to entice the Soviets back to nuclear arms reduction negotiations.

The Russians have demanded a moratorium on testing anti-satellite weapons in space as a precondition for resuming the talks.

Western defense analysts say space-based weapons would radically change the strategic relationship between the superpowers.